II. NATURE OF THE TERRITORY

137 The Tanala territory is, almost without exception, wooded and mountainous. On the eastern side of the divide there are still considerable areas of virgin forest. These, for the most part, are in regions too steep and broken for even the very primitive native methods of agriculture to handle them profitably. Enormous trees of many species rise a hundred feet or more and interlace their branches to form a roof which the sunlight never penetrates. Their larger limbs are covered with veritable hanging gardens of orchids, ferns and airplants. Below this roof the air is laced with a network of aerial roots and vines, with a few smaller trees climbing upward. At the ground there is a stratum of dense undergrowth, mostly succulent, which is so thick that it is almost impossible to travel outside the well-worn trails.

136 The virgin jungle is gloomy and forbidding. It is not silent, for one is never away from the sound of water, gurgling in innumerable little streams and dripping from the high branches, but there seems, at first encounter, to be almost no animal or bird life. One discovers the footprints of wild boar and fossa (a cat-like carnivor) but never sees these animals unless accompanied by a pack of hunting dogs. The lemurs, which are actually fairly numerous, are all arboreal and mostly nocturnal, spending their days curled up in the tree tops. The birds, for the most part, keep to the jungle roof and the big black parrots are the only ones which advertise their presence. Even with modern firearms and a good knowledge of jungle lore it is impossible to live on the country.

137 On the less abrupt slopes the original jungle has been cleared away by the natives, who burn new patches year after year and plant their crops in the ashes. The native forest trees grow slowly, for the most part, and land once cleared never again approximates the virgin growth. At the lower altitudes the old clearings are covered with bushes and low trees, with dense stands of the Traveler's Palm. Higher up, the Traveler's Palm becomes scarce and is replaced by great stretches of small bamboo with stems fifteen to twenty feet long. These grow separately or in small clumps and bend under the wind and rain so that, from a distance, they look like drooping fern fronds. Under and between them there is a thick growth of long grass and tough bushes, making it almost impossible to force one's way through.

the addition to its man power. These alliances were aided by the common language of the natives and immigrants and by the great number of cultural features which they always had in common. Lastly, the region was never densely inhabited and the rapid, if temporary, exhaustion of the soil through the native methods of agriculture prevented the population from becoming too firmly fixed in one place.

The Tanaia always have been, and still are, a more or less accidental agglomeration of groups of diverse origin who have entered the territory at different times. Although all of them have numerous cultural features in common and speak mutually intelligible dialects, they cannot be said to resemble each other more closely than the various gens, individually, resemble certain of the units in neighboring tribes. In spite of this, the term Tanaia seems to have more than a geographical significance for the natives themselves. They have a rather shadowy sense of unity, which is strongest in the case of gentes living close together. This is reflected in the different attitudes toward Tanaia and foreign slaves and in the clear distinction between gentes which are Tanaia and those which are not. Any informant can instantly place any gens which he has heard of as being inside or outside the tribe. Moreover, within the tribe there are certain large divisions, not necessarily political units, which are universally recognized. Apparently membership in the tribe is based mainly on length of residence in the territory. Any group which has lived in the region more than three or four generations is counted Tanaia.

The Tanaia themselves recognize two main divisions of the tribe, the Tanaia Hemaha, who occupy the northern part of the territory, and the Tanaia Ikonga, who occupy the southern part. The Ikonga take their name from Mount Ikonga, about 8 kilometers from Fort Carnot. Father Antoine says:

"Mount Ikonga was the refuge of all the inhabitants of the [northern] forest region in time of war. The top was level and could only be reached by one path, narrow and difficult. It was cultivated, providing food during sieges. This mountain was never conquered by the Iraquen. The top was divided in two parts, Anamjaruanga on the northeast and Tsinjaruanga on the south. On the southwest corner of Anamjaruanga, called Mitsiwa, there was a small, rocky hill where the ancient inhabitants sacrificed an ox to their ancestors for protection and victory before going to battle. This hill was shaped like a cattle fish, Ikonga, and gave the name Ikonga to the mountain."

V. ECONOMIC LIFE

Sources of Food

AGRICULTURE

The foundation of Tanala economic life is agriculture and the natives cannot conceive of existence without it. During the seasons of planting and harvest all other activities are suspended. Tanala who have entered the employ of Europeans will always specify that they must receive leave at those times to return to their villages to attend to their rice, and will do so even when it entails a considerable financial loss. Every able-bodied member of the tribe takes part in the work and even kings do not consider it beneath their dignity to work on their own plantations.

The account of Ikongo agriculture given by Sadaro Antoine is of such interest that it seems best to quote it in full. He says: "Our crops are rice, maize, manioc, beans, batatas, *pendo* and *kalamaka* [two varieties of ground nut] and many sorts of greens, cucumbers, sweetpotatoes, *zozimanga*, etc.

"The growing of rice is our principal culture and it is the foundation of our food. Our ancestors knew only six varieties: *vary lava*, *vary hatsiko*, *vahenga*, *vary mandilaika*, *lemainaky* and *malady*. Rice is cultivated twice a year, the first crop being called *vary aloka* and the second *vary aforo*. The Ikongo have three sorts of land: 1. *Tany* [newly cleared forest]. 2. *Hanka* [swampy land]. 3. *Hony* [terraced and irrigated land]. The *vary aloka* is sown in the *hanka* or *hony* in the month *Meke* [July] and harvested in the month *Asoramanjay* [November]. The *vary aforo* is sown in the *tany* in *Asoramanjay* [November] and harvested in *Volamiro* [April].

"This is how the *tany* is made: The weather is fine, the sun bright. It commences to be hot. The *ombiasy* and *famoitra* are in flower, *ondo* sprout, and the shoots of the *anorana*, *valambora* and *nanahoa* begin to open. The birds *finaivana*, *vailonga* and *alily* sing from the trees. These are the signs foretelling the *Jiakaw* [time for cutting the *tany*]. The men leave the village and go to some mountain or hollow covered with thick forest. They halt at the edge of the forest and divide the land to make the *tany*. Each one sets up a mark on his part, the *orapon tany*. Satisfied with the division they return to the village loaded with faggots. The next morning all go to work. Everything, trees, bushes and vines, is cut down. After two or three days of individual work the men begin to help each other (in cutting down

and greens. When the harvest is finished and the rice in the *homby* 243
the members of the family return to the village. They have been away for five months. The man repairs the *tranoambo* [rice granary] and the rice is brought to it from the *homby*, the whole village assisting.

"Maize (*tsako*) is cultivated in the whole region and is second to rice. We distinguish a number of varieties: *tsakoala*, *varadaja*, *tsakoamboritra*, *tsakobiby*, *tsakofotsy*, *tsakoloroka* and *tsakorondra*. Maize is grown in all seasons, but it is during the hot season that it gives the best yield. It is sown in the *tany* at the same time as the rice, or planted in alluvial soil in the valleys. Small holes are made with a pointed stick from 50 to 70 centimeters apart and two or three grains put in each hole. It is ripe three or four months after planting. The maize for the next sowing is put in a dry bamboo filled with ashes to keep the insects from damaging it. That which is to be eaten is put in a dry place over the fire or hung up in the granary. Maize pounded and cooked in water with beans or honey forms an [252] excellent food. We also eat it roasted.

"Beans (*voatelo*) are very common in the region. We distinguish 244
eight species: *voatelokobo*, *voatelosoratra*, *velotompo*, *tsatsakoria*, *varavaro*, *voatelo be*, *voatelosakay*, and *voatelovoronoay*. Beans like alluvial soil or the site of an old village. Like maize, they are planted in small holes about 50 centimeters apart, two or three seeds to the hole. They are planted in the month *Sakare* [September] in newly burned ground. The crop is weeded when the plants have three leaves. At the end of the second month they flower and produce pods. At the end of the third month the pods break off and are harvested.

"Manioc (*tsaoka*) attains a height of 2 to 3 meters. There are two varieties, *kasaka ala*, which is best, and *dompatry*. It is planted by cuttings, which grow readily, even in very poor soil. It is planted in the month *Sakamany* [August]. When the ground is ready, holes are made about a meter apart and a cutting put in each hole, care being taken to place it horizontally. It is weeded about forty-five days after planting. At the end of seven months one may begin to gather it. The root is sometimes eaten raw, but is more often boiled or roasted in hot ashes. The root is also preserved by cutting it in pieces and drying it in the sun."

The above account needs to be supplemented in several details. 241
In agriculture by the *tany* method it is necessary to allow the land to lie fallow for from five to ten years between plantings. The growth which springs up during this time consists mostly of bamboo,

1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

241 fern and low bushes and the second planting never yields as good crops as the first. Because of this, the natives try to clear new land each season, going farther and farther from their villages. There is little effort to keep the fires within bounds and if the season is dry [361] large areas of uncut timber are often burned over. The result is a wholesale destruction of large timber and the final exhaustion of the lands about a village. When this occurs, the village must be moved to new territory but, curiously enough, the natives never gave land exhaustion as a reason for such movements. The village will move [791] on the advice of an *ombiasy* ("medicine-man"), who will assign some supernatural reason for the crop failures.

241 423 59% When the *tavy* is inconveniently far from the village, the people camp there, building small, temporary houses. Among the Menabe the members of each lineage formerly camped and worked together, as a protection from enemy raids. When a section of land was to be cleared and burned, the heads of families marked out sectors along its front and each family cleared back into the jungle as far as it thought necessary to provide food for the year. The families thus had strips of crop land of approximately equal width, but of a length proportionate to their industry. The crops were the absolute property of the family, but the land reverted to the lineage and was reapportioned at the next burning. At the present time, this method has largely lapsed, and families are holding and working their *tavy* independently.

241 Seed for rice and other crops is usually collected shortly after the harvest and kept in joints of bamboo, small cloth bags, etc. These are hung up in the dwelling, over the fireplace, so that the smoke will help to protect them from insects. Sometimes wood ashes are mixed with the seed for the same reason. In a few houses I found [513] soft bags of matting, stuffed with seed rice, in use as pillows. Seed beans are sometimes kept in peculiar baskets made in imitation of clusters of bean pods (Fig. 1, c, d).

241 789 As far as I could learn, no special importance is attached to the selection of seed. There are no seed gathering ceremonies, no charms are placed with the seed, and there is no attempt to increase its yield by magical means. Seeds are usually soaked in warm water before planting, but this is not a universal practice.

Apparently no rites to promote fertility are performed at planting time. This is rather curious in view of the wide occurrence of such rites in connection with Asiatic rice culture, but I am convinced that if they ever existed among the Tanala they have been forgotten.

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782 Brockway[1] says: "At planting time the Tanala [Menabe] kill oxen. . . . What is killed, with a considerable quantity of *toaka* [rum] is laid upon altars in the fields as an offering to their ancestors. . . . The altar stones on which the offerings are made are a curiosity and I have seen them nowhere else in Madagascar." The "altar stones," which he describes, are evidently memorial stones of the usual Tanala form and he probably mistook a special for a general practice. Sacrifices are necessary when crops are planted in a *zintana* (place belonging to the ancestral spirits, see p. 168) but not for ordinary planting.

241 After the *tavy* has been burned, little or no attempt is made to prepare the field further. At most, piles of ashes left by large trees will be leveled and some of the ash carried and spread on bare spots. [412] The planting is done with a dibble of hard wood 4 to 5 feet long and about 1½ inches in diameter (Fig. 1, a). One informant said that the point must always be made from the root end of the sapling, as otherwise the plants would not grow strong and erect. Holes are punched in the soil to a depth of 3 or 4 inches, the seed dropped in and covered with the foot. There is no attempt to plant in regular rows. Seeds of all sorts are carried mixed together in a deep, narrow basket which is slung from the waist in front or on the right side (Fig. 1, b). Among the Menabe, at least, seeds of several sorts are often planted in the same hole. The planting is usually done by men, but the women often assist.

412 241 Aside from the dibble just described, the only Tanala agricultural implement is the spade. This has an iron blade 1 foot to 18 inches long and 4 or 5 inches wide. The blade is flat or slightly concave and the cutting edge straight. At the top there is a rounded shoulder and a deep socket for the insertion of a handle (Fig. 1, k). The handle is straight and about 5 feet long and is made from hard, heavy wood. The shoulder of the spade is too narrow to be used as a step in forcing it into the ground. It is swung with both hands, driven into the ground, and a piece of earth levered out.

Tanala spades are identical with those of the neighboring plateau tribes and nearly all of them are imported from that region. Among the groups which live exclusively by *tavy* agriculture they are little used and I found that many families did not own one. Their main use is in the construction of terraces and in the preparation of the earth before planting wet rice and I suspect that many of the gantes did not use them in ancient times. Hoes are unknown in Madagascar.

[1] Brockway, T. A., A Visit to Ambohimanga in the Tanala Country, Antananarivo Annual, 2nd Ed., No. 2, p. 181.

1: Linton E-5 (1926-27) 1933 FY8 Tanala FY8

There is no cultivation of standing crops. Weeding is done by hand, usually by the women and children. The fields are sometimes fenced with posts and saplings bound crosswise with withes, somewhat like our own post and rail fences, but this seems to be rare. It is only resorted to in places where the wild pigs are numerous.

When the grain begins to ripen, members of the family are on guard day and night to drive away birds and wild pigs, whose nocturnal raids often cause serious damage. Cords with bits of cloth or leaves attached are sometimes suspended over the fields, but there seem to be no elaborate scarecrows comparable to those of Malaysia. Bamboo bull-roarers are often used to frighten away the birds, but this task is usually delegated to small boys armed with slings. They are very expert with these weapons and I have seen a boy bring down a bird no larger than a sparrow at twenty yards. At night the men keep guard with spears, to drive off pigs. Also, traps are set in their runs and at gaps in the fence.

The Menabe, like the Ikongo, sacrifice before beginning the harvest, but their method is slightly different. A post, called *fatotra*, is set up in the *tavy* of each family. It is about 4 feet high and 2 or 3 inches in diameter (Fig. 23, k). The top is split in the form of a cross and little wedges inserted with their ends projecting almost horizontally, forming a small stand or platform about 6 inches across. The husband, not the wife, gathers the green rice and makes the *lango*. He places a little of it, on a piece of the leaf of the Traveler's Palm, on the *fatotra* and says: "Oh *Fahasivy* [ancestors], you have given us a good harvest. We give you this meal as your share." The neighboring Betsimisaraka make their harvest sacrifice in the same way, but mix rice chaff with the *lango*.

After the sacrifice has been made, the harvest commences. The rice is headed with small iron knives identical with those used in weaving, as razors, etc. (Fig. 1, f). The stalks are cut between the knife blade and the thumb, two or three at a time, and the heads dropped into a basket held in the left hand. The heads are often dried on mats in the sun before they are stored. No use is made of the straw, which is left to rot in the fields.

The granaries, *homby*, are small houses, shaped like miniature dwellings. The walls and floor are of split and interwoven bamboo and the roof heavily thatched with the leaves of the Traveler's Palm. They are always raised on smooth posts, to keep out the rats, but the height varies greatly. The average is about 6 feet, but some are as low as 4 feet, and others as high as 12 feet. There is a small door

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243 no taboo against wet rice, but rarely raise it, because of the labor involved. The Zafimaniry still have a strong taboo against it.
[173] According to their own tradition, they were the last of the Menabe gentes to settle in the territory. They originally lived in the Ankaratra, a mountainous part of the plateau, and raised wet rice, like the other tribes of this area. Enemies attacked them when their men were dispersed, repairing their rice terraces. They were driven out of their territory and when they re-established themselves, they tabooed wet rice cultivation, which they held responsible for the calamity. The taboo is so strong that when Betsileo immigrants began to cultivate wet rice in their country, some twenty-five or thirty years ago, they broke down the terraces and destroyed the crop.

Tanala wet rice culture is still crude in comparison with that of the plateau tribes. They do not use fertilizer, sow in seed beds, or transplant. Terrace systems are still very rare. The soil of a natural swamp is turned over with spades to a depth of about 1 foot, all but the largest vegetation being dug in. Cattle are then driven back and forth over the plot until the earth is churned to a soft muck. The rice is sown broadcast but not trodden in. Later, the crop is weeded once or twice. The harvest sacrifice is the same as for the *tany*.

● 241 In addition to rice and the plants grown in the *tany*, the Menabe grow bananas, sweet potatoes and sugar cane. None of these are of
245 great economic importance. Bananas are planted in or near the village, often in solitary clumps. The young plants are sometimes fenced to protect them from pigs, but require no other care. The fruit is small and of indifferent quality. It is cut green and hung up over the fireplace, where it soon becomes blackened with smoke. It is allowed to become soft and thoroughly ripe, then eaten raw. The plantain seems to be unknown.

286 The Tanala do not use banana fiber. The Betsileo, their neigh-
171 bors, formerly used it extensively in weaving and raised certain varieties of banana almost exclusively for it. They claim that it was the first material woven by them.

244 Sweet potatoes are grown from the shoots. Bunches of these are planted in holes at intervals of about 2 feet. The ground is not prepared. New patches may be weeded a month or two after planting, but the growth of the vines is so luxuriant that they soon strangle all other vegetation. The plants begin bearing in six to eight months and continue to produce for two or three years, after which the tubers become small and fibrous. The roots are dug a few at a time, as

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needed, the digger locating them by prodding the soil with a pointed stick. The patches are small and are always near the village. 244

Sugar cane grows in isolated clumps in or near the villages. I saw no plantations. The stalks are chewed, like candy, and bundles of the leaves are sometimes used as torches. The juice is also extracted by crushing the cane between wooden rollers. This is allowed to ferment and is then drunk as beer or distilled into rum. No sugar or syrup is made. 249

Castor oil plants are often to be seen growing near the villages and a few of them are sometimes planted in the *tavy*. The oil is extracted with a crude press, like that used for honey. It is used in hair dressing and is often a part of charms. Whole beans are also used to make a sort of taper or night light. [354]

Small and extremely hot red peppers are used as a condiment. They grow wild on old village sites and abandoned fields. 263

The Tanala believe that all their crops are indigenous. A very careful investigation failed to reveal any traditions of the introduction of maize, manioc or tobacco. 241 173

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The Tanala originally had the following domestic animals: dogs (*amboha*), cattle (*omby*), goats (*bengy*), chickens (*akoho*), and a very large duck with dark plumage and red wattles (*dokotra*). Sheep, cats, ordinary ducks and geese and turkeys have all been introduced within the historic period, but are of little economic importance. In the drier and less heavily forested parts of the Tanala territory guinea fowl have been semi-domesticated since ancient times. Eggs are taken from the nests of the wild birds and the young hatched and reared by hens. They are fed on a special diet of termite eggs and larvae. Apparently guinea fowl will not breed in captivity and are usually killed as soon as they become full grown. 231

The native dog is almost extinct, due to repeated crossing with other breeds. It stands about 18 inches at the shoulder and is solid yellowish brown or black, with white under parts. The coat is medium long, fine and glossy. The tail is fringed and is carried low. The head is wide between the ears, with a muzzle of medium length and strong jaws. The ears are rather large, pointed, and erect. The animal appears stealthy in its movements and rarely barks.

Dogs are used to trail wild pig and to bring the animal to bay, so that it can be speared by the hunters. They are never used [224]